



## Representing Onomatopoeias in the Britain Comic and their Translations in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Onomatopoeia can be assumed as one of the most unique lingual forms in human communication. The translation of its form into another language as from English into Indonesian, for example, always tends to be a very interesting issue or topic of analysis. This paper tries to reveal the issue of onomatopoeias found in the Asterix: Asterix in Britain comic and their translations in Indonesian through these following three basic formulations: (1) What types of onomatopoeias are found in the Asterix: Asterix in Britain comic?(2) How are they translated into Indonesian as found in its translated Indonesian version? Lastly, (3) How do their natural features and arbitrariness impact the techniques of translation applied? The method used in this analysis is a descriptive-qualitative method. 103 words are identified as onomatopoeic words categorized into (1) miscellaneous sounds (74, 8%), (2) human sounds (19, 4%), (3) animal sounds (3, 9%), and (4) nature sounds (1, 9%)—all of which are based on Rozmej and Drabikowska's classification (2015). In term of their translation techniques, the most applied technique in translating them is adaptation, amounting for 72, 8%, and the least applied is compensation that amounts for only 0, 9%. The other techniques found are naturalized borrowing, pure borrowing, and amplification. These techniques make impact on the results of translation whether the forms of onomatopoeia translated are constantly maintained, changed, or removed.

### Introduction

Comic translation comprises not only the transfer of written materials (linguistic forms) but also pictorial contents (non-linguistic forms). Therefore, those two aspects need to be negotiated properly when they are translated from one language into another. The negotiation involved in the process of its translation is somewhat intercultural and takes a thorough deliberation. As comics are considered as culturally mobile entities, their translation practices should facilitate their cultural mobility (Altenberg and Owen, 2015). Principally, the translation of comics affects the entire repertoire of expressive meaning in both verbal and visual modes, as well as the ways in which they interact (*ibid*, 2015).

Onomatopoeia, one of linguistic forms frequently appears in comics, is pretty much intriguing to be taken into account as the object of translation study. The translation of this linguistic form is rarely, if not always, conducted without any constraints. Since translation is not merely the case of transferring meaning, but in such a wider sense, as the case of transferring culture (Brislin in Nababan, 1999), translating onomatopoeias needs not only a deliberate linguistics comprehension but also in-depth socio-cultural awareness. Furthermore, the phonological

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forms produced or sounded in the source language might not always have a direct equivalence in the target language.

Some researches on onomatopoeia translation have been previously conducted by other researchers. Among of which are Rahayu's *Prosedur dan Strategi Penerjemahan Onomatope Bahasa Jepang dalam Novel Botchan Karya Natsume Soseki* (2015), Kusuma's *The Study of Onomatopoeia Types and Translation Strategies in Don Rosa's The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* (2013), and Inose's *Translating Japanese Onomatopoeia and Mimetic Words* (2007). Although all those researches are descriptive-qualitative and discuss onomatopoeia and its translation, they have dissimilar focuses of attention. Rahayu (2015) centralizes on the translation strategies and procedures applied to translate onomatopoeias in a Japanese novel into Indonesian mainly based on Vinay and Drabernet's procedures (2000) and Baker's strategies (1992). Kusuma (2013) focuses on analyzing onomatopoeias found in an English comic series entitled *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* (2013) by applying Bredin's onomatopoeia theory (1996) and how they are translated through Newmark's translation strategies (1981). On the other hand, Inose (2007) tries to reveal the methods used to translate Japanese onomatopoeias found in a Japanese novel into Spanish and English mainly by using Kojien's onomatopoeia and mimetic words theory.

This paper aims at describing onomatopoeias found in *Asterix: Asterix in Britain*, a selected volume of bilingual *Asterix* comics, their translations in Indonesian, and the techniques applied in translating them. It also tries to reveal how their natural features and arbitrariness affect the use of the translation techniques applied. In addition, the paper is expected to be widely accepted as one of reliable and invaluable works on the study of onomatopoeia and translation and can be taken into account as one of resources for further research.

### **Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia can be defined as the iconic sign of hearing or the name of an object consisting of a word or series of words derived from the artificial or imitative sound it produces (Abrams, 1999). In other word, it denotes to the outcome of a sound mimicking process encountered by human in their surroundings derived from the sounds of human, animals, nature, machines, or tools (Assaneo *et al*, 2011). It emphasizes that onomatopoeia is rather universal in nature—all human being have the ability to imitate sounds they hear. Yet, the way they imitate the sounds depends on the anatomical structure of their vocal organs. Therefore, the sounds they reproduce might not always have similar look (Bredin, 1996).

Rozmej and Drabikowska (2015) classified two general types of onomatopoeia: (1) Imitative Onomatopoeia, and (2) Echoic Onomatopoeia. This classification is not based on what is designated but on what is imitated. Here are some slight descriptions on these two types of onomatopoeia as proposed by them:

#### **(1) Imitative Onomatopoeia**

This type of onomatopoeia refers to sounds produced by human's vocal apparatus or by other animate beings', such as human's mouth productions (stutter, mumble, etc.) and animal's cries (bark, chirp, etc).

#### **(2) Echoic Onomatopoeia**

Another refers to sounds that don't come from any vocal apparatus. These types of sound are associated with inanimate sounds derived from events, noises, environment or nature.



**Figure 1** Imitative Onomatopoeia  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)



**Figure 2** Echoic Onomatopoeia  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)

These two images (1 and 2) present us two types of onomatopoeia. The word 'sniff' in Image 1 is identified as Imitative Onomatopoeia derived from animal's vocal apparatus denoting a sobering sound of a little dog. Meanwhile, the word 'bang' in Image 2 is identified as Echoic Onomatopoeia denoting the sound of a blade crashing onto a shield.

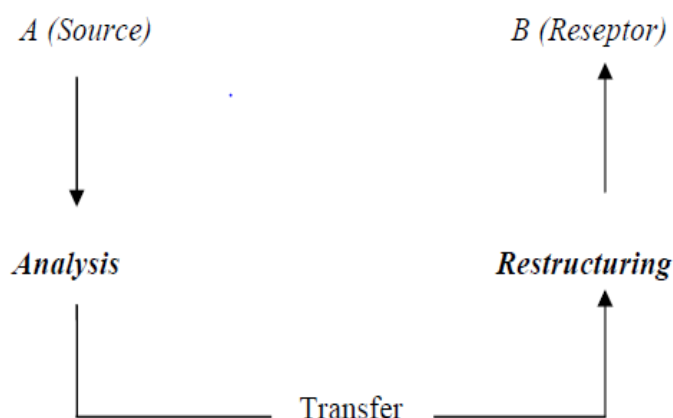
Onomatopoeia is conceptually related to iconicity—the similarity shared by sign and object embodying the real world which one can associate simply by looking at the referred icon (Fischer and Ljunberg, 2008). Particular sets of English phonemes might occasionally be associated with particular sounds of particular entities. Acoustically, as for instance, the sets of phonemes /-ash/ and their variations particularly constructed as English suffixes are occasionally associated with some particular meanings indicating 'rapid movements' i.e., 'splash', 'flash', and 'dash'. Another affix indicating 'movement' can be seen in prefix /fl/ as we can see in 'flap', 'flee', 'flicker', 'fling',

and 'flow' (Zlatev, 2014). This proposition is associatively in line with the idea of sound symbolism—sounds symbolize meanings. Sound symbolism is determined by the level of relationship shared by sound and meaning. It represents symptomatic sounds related to human's emotional and physical conditions (*Corporeal Sound Symbolism*—such as 'aaarrghhh', 'brrrrr', 'ow'), imitative sounds derived from nature and environment (*Imitative Sound Symbolism*—such as 'woof-woof', 'knock-knock'), sounds representing non-acoustic phenomena, such as movement, size, and shape (*Synesthetic Sound Symbolism*), and sounds related to phonemic associations (*Conventional Sound Symbolism*—'fly', 'flick', 'fling') (Hinton, Johanna, and Ohala, 1994).

### Translation & Translation Technique

Translation can principally be viewed from two perspectives: as a process and as a product (Hatim and Munday, 2004). As a process, it refers to all activities related to the process of taking the original (ST) and turning it into a text in another language (TT). Whilst as a product, it signifies the translation product as the result of any activities conducted in the process of translating.

Giving more emphasis on translation as a process, this following chart proposed by Nida and Taber (1982: 33) describes how it goes:



**Figure 3** Nida and Taber's Translation Process (Source: Nida and Taber, 1982: 33)

As it is described in the image above, we can see that translation is regarded not as a single-staged action but as a three-staged repeated-able action (analyzing-transferring-restructuring) where all the stages can be repeated as much as they are required to find solutions toward any translation problems that might appear along the process of translation (Mansur, 2014).

This process is not only the matter of taking and turning the textual materials (form and message) of a language (SL) into another (TL) but also the matter of transferring the socio-cultural aspect conveyed by the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) (Newmark, 1981; and Brislin in Nababan, 1999).

In a product-based translation research, translation technique becomes one of the most common issues to be taken into account as the topic of discussion. As stated by Molina and Albir (2002), translation technique refers to a textual analysis instrument to observe how translation equivalence works related to the original text. In addition, it should reflect five basic principles: (1) affecting the translation result (2) classified by comparing the TL to the SL (3) affecting micro-units of text (4) being discursive and contextual, and (5) being functional (*ibid*, 2002). Functionally, the translation techniques can be classified into eighteen categories as we can see in this following table:

**Table 1** Molina and Albir's Translation Techniques (2002) as cited in Mansur (2016)

No	Techniques	Description	No	Techniques	Description
1.	Adaptation	Replacing cultural element in ST with one in TT	10.	Linguistic Amplification	Adding linguistic elements
2.	Amplification	Introducing details which are not in ST	11.	Literal Translation	Word for word translation
3.	Borrowing	Taking a word or expression straight from another language	12.	Modulation	Changing the point of view, focus, or cognitive category related to the ST
4.	Calque	Literal translation of a foreign word or phrase	13.	Particularization	Using a more precise or concrete term
5.	Compensation	Introducing a ST element of information or a stylistic effect in another place in the TT.	14.	Reduction	Suppressing a ST information item in the TL
6.	Description	Replacing a term or expression with a description of its form or function	15.	Substitution	Changing linguistic elements for paralinguistic elements
7.	Discursive Creation	Establishing a temporary unpredictably out of context equivalence	16.	Transposition	Changing a grammatical category
8.	Generalization	Using a more general or neutral term	17.	Variation	Changing linguistic or paralinguistic elements that affects aspect of linguistic variation
9.	Linguistic Compression	Synthesizing linguistic elements in the TL	18.	Established Equivalent	Using a term or expression recognized (by dictionary or language use) as an equivalent in the TL

(Source: Mansur, 2016)

How translation technique was defined initially came from a sticky debate over translation method, strategy, and technique. These three categories should be distinguished since they refer to essentially different entities (Hurtado, 1996, as cited in Molina and Albir, 2002). The distinction between method and technique lies on how both method and technique are carried out. Method refers to a global option affecting the whole text that is carried out by a translator according to his/her objective. On the other hand, technique refers to each solution chosen by a translator as a response to the translation method carried out (*ibid*, 2002: 507).



## Comic Translation

Translating comics needs a meticulous deliberation since they do not only include transferring linguistic contents but also extra-lingual contents such as symbols and pictures. This goes along with the idea stated by Zanfei (2008) as cited in Altenberg and Owen (2015) that translating comics requires consideration of the entire features related to text-only translation, as well as their multimodality facets. This occurrence gives a translator a demanding task to transfer them—they need to retain message as well as to accommodate extra-lingual settings at the same time due to the fact that meaning in comics may lie in their written text elements, drawings and blank spaces, with the readers and their cultures (*ibid*, 2015). In addition, speaking of onomatopoeia translation in relation with the demanding task the translator would have as mentioned above, Regor (2015) claimed that comic is the most prolific publication of this short of lingual specimen and the main constrain does not lie on the lack of understanding but on the loss of onomatopoeic words in the target language.

## Methods

This paper uses a descriptive-qualitative method by which all the onomatopoeic words and their translations taken from the source of the data are discussed. Onomatopoeic words collected from *Asterix: Asterix in Britain* bilingual comic are subsequently analyzed by applying Spradley's data analysis technique (Spradley, 1980). The analysis consists of some series of stages, as follow: (1) Domain Analysis—at which all the data identified as onomatopoeic words from the comic book are validated (2) Taxonomy Analysis—at which all the onomatopoeic words identified are classified into types based on the onomatopoeia theories used, and (3) Componential Analysis—at which all the onomatopoeic words classified are connected with the translation techniques identified to find out correlations shared between them, to finally find (4) Cultural Value.

## Results and Discussion

### Onomatopoeias in *Asterix: Asterix in Britain Bilingual*

One hundred three onomatopoeic words were found in the *Asterix: Asterix in Britain* bilingual comic. All the data identified onomatopoeic words were classified based on Rozmej and Drabikowska's onomatopoeia classification (Rojmej and Drabikowska, 2015). The data were then categorized into (1) *Imitative Onomatopoeia* (24 data of 103, or 23.3%)—subsequently divided into *Human Sounds* (20 data, or 19.4%) and *Animal Sounds* (4 data, or 3.9%), and (2) *Echoic Onomatopoeia* (79 data of 103, or 76.7%)—particularly divided into *Nature Sounds* (77 data, or 74.8%) and *Miscellaneous Sounds* (2 data, or 1.9%).

*Imitative Onomatopoeias* found in the comic are mostly *Human Sounds* amounting for 20 data of total 24 data along with *Animal Sounds* that cover the rest of the total data. *Imitative Onomatopoeia* is defined as sound produced by either human or animal vocal apparatus that describes or imitates living being's behavior (Rozmej and Drabikowska, 2015).



**Figure 4** Example of *Human Sound* found  
(Source: *Asterix in Britain*)

As we can observe from the data example above, the word ‘YOICKS!’ is sorted out as *Imitative Onomatopoeia* reflecting a sound coming from human’s vocal apparatus. In addition, this sort of sound tends to convey some particular meaning to the readers and to help the readers contextualize it with the storyline presented. This onomatopoeic word is uttered as an exclamation indicating command to force the horse to dash away from the hunters hunting the characters. Another example below represents *Imitative Onomatopoeia* reflecting the sound coming from the animal’s vocal apparatus.



**Figure 5** Example of *Animal Sound* found  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)

The data above shows us an example of *Animal Sound* found in the comic. The words ‘WOOF! WOOF!’ are identified as *Imitative Sounds* embodying a dog’s bark. We can see that the appearance of these sort of *Imitative Sounds* tend not to just aim at showing how a dog’s bark but truly to convey some particular implicit meaning. The ‘WOOF! WOOF!’ by the dog themselves tend to strengthen the nuance of excitement arousing from its master excitedly saying, “We’re going to see the Romans! We’re going to see the Romans! TRALALA!” and they apply as a response.

Instead of *Imitative Sounds* above, another type of onomatopoeia known as *Echoic Onomatopoeia* is found. This consists of *Nature Sounds* and *Miscellaneous Sounds*. Whilst *Miscellaneous Sounds* are claimed as the most dominant—amounting for 77 data of the entire 103 data of all onomatopoeic words found, *Nature Sounds* only appear two times. Here are the examples of the data found of this type.



**Figure 6** Example of *Nature Sound* found  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)

The word 'SPLOSH!' written in no balloon above indicates the sound of object falling into a bucket of water. This comes as a result of a collision of an object onto the surface of the water. This is categorized into *Echoic Onomatopoeia* reflecting sound of nature coming from the surrounding. Another example might indicate *Echoic Sound* reflecting a direct imitation of an inanimate sound.



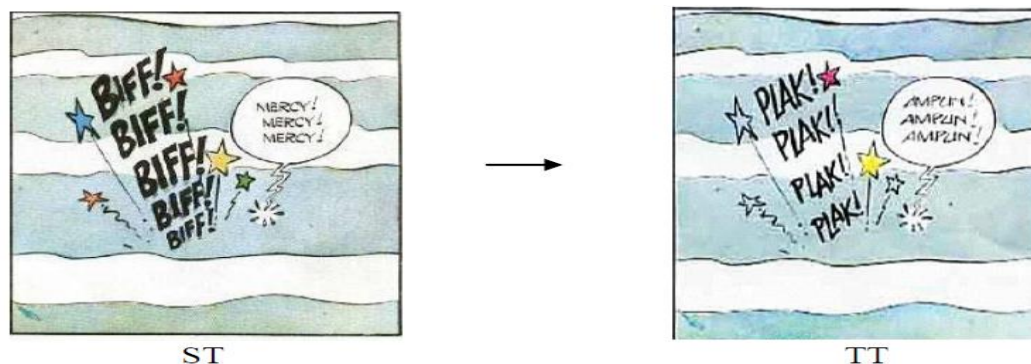
**Figure 7** Example of *Miscellaneous Sounds* found  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)

The word 'BANG!' is onomatopoeic and classified into *Echoic Onomatopoeia*. This occurs for the word itself does not reflect both human and animal's vocal apparatus. This occurs as the result of the clash between two inanimate objects, a sword and a shield, in a battlefield. The intention of this occurrence is of course to intensify the nuance or sense of a battlefield itself to the readers.

### **How They are Translated and What Techniques are Applied**

To reveal how the onomatopoeias are translated and what techniques are applied to translate them is as much as fascinating as to define their types. The translation techniques applied range from adaptation, defined as the most applied technique amounting for 72.8%, to the least applied technique, which is compensation technique as much as 0.9%. Besides the most and the least applied techniques above, there are still other three techniques applied: naturalized borrowing (13.60%), pure borrowing (9.7%), and amplification (2.9%).

The adaptation technique as the most applied technique seems to replace the sound symbols in the ST's onomatopoeia when they are translated into the TT's onomatopoeia. This occurs due to the differences in the socio-cultural aspect of the sound symbol system of those two languages.

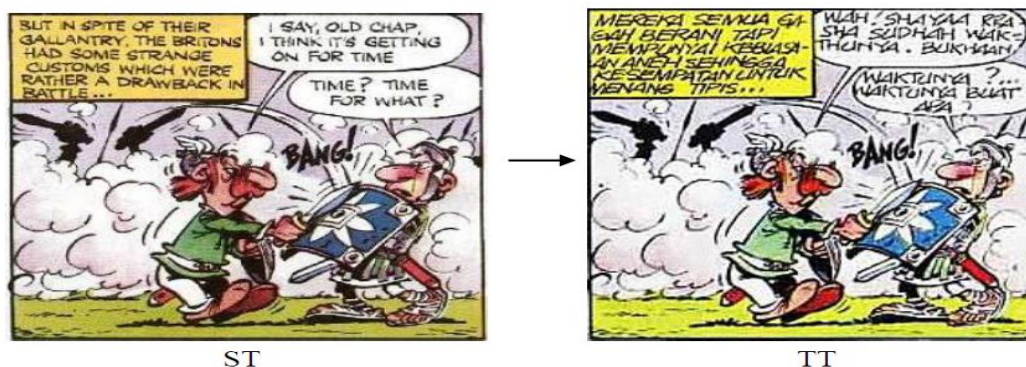


**Figure 8** Example of adaption techniques applied  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)



The *Echoic Onomatopoeia* 'BIFF' repeatedly written 'BIFF! BIFF! BIFF! BIFF! BIFF!' is translated into Indonesian's 'PLAK' repeatedly written as 'PLAK! PLAK! PLAK! PLAK! PLAK!' Although the form has been changed, both of the ST and the TT still hold similar meaning—representing the sound of someone hitting other or presumably reciprocally each other by using hands.

The onomatopoeic words are occasionally found translated by either pure or naturalized borrowing technique. Frequently, but not always, they tend to be translated into the same word and composition without changing the original. As we can see in the below figure, the onomatopoeic word 'BANG!' is translated into the same word as the original into Indonesian's 'BANG!'



**Figure 9** Example of pure borrowing technique  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)

Some are obviously modified by adding some additional features in their internal composition when translated into Indonesian. For example, the onomatopoeic word 'GLUG' repeatedly written as 'GLUG GLUG GLUG!' in the following figure is translated into Indonesian's 'GLUGUK' repeatedly written as 'GLUGUK GLUGUK!' Similar to the previous examples, both the ST and the TT share similar meaning and intention to show the sound of someone's throat drinking water or any beverages hurriedly. This translation is assumed to apply linguistic amplification technique.



**Figure 10** Example of linguistic amplification  
(Source: Asterix in Britain)

Since adaptation technique becomes the most applied technique in translating onomatopoeic words available in the comic, it makes any sense if most of the onomatopoeic words translated are shifted when they are transferred into Indonesian. Only a few are left unchanged or deleted. These applications of the techniques might abruptly change the forms but not the intentions or the meanings.

## Conclusion

The *Asterix: Asterix in Britain* comic provides onomatopoeic words that are fully dominated by *Imitative Sounds*—most of which are miscellaneous. The way they are translated into Indonesian does not seem too problematic since the originals tend to easily be adapted or adjusted into Indonesian's equivalences almost for the same spirits. The constraints appeared might lead the translator to apply some direct translation as borrowing techniques—either pure or naturalized. Although the translation techniques tremendously affect the result of the translations, especially in case of the shifts occurred, the meaning and the intention including the sense and the nuance are persistently preserved.

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